

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY ARA:WHLUERS:AN

APPROVED BY ARA:WDROGERS

ARA/NC:FJDEVINE

S/S - MR. BORG

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TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 161300

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: VE, ENRG, PFOR, EINV

SUBJECT: TALK WITH AMBASSADOR BURELLI

FOR THE AMBASSADOR ONLY

1. AMBASSADOR BURELLI CALLED ON DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LUERS ON TUESDAY, JULY 8 TO REPORT ON HIS BRIEF WEEKEND TRIP TO CARACAS. HIS PRIMARY MESSAGE WAS TO REPORT THAT PRESIDENT PEREZ HAD SAID TO BURELLI TO TELL "MI AMIGO LUERS TO WORK OUT THIS PROBLEM OF FMS CREDITS FOR THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY." PEREZ SAID THAT HE HAS TOLD THE MILITARY THEY SHOULD PROCEED TO USE THE U.S. CREDITS AND HE CONSIDERS IT IMPORTANT THAT THE U.S. CONTINUE THESE TIES WITH THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY. LUERS SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO SOME WAY TO GET AROUND THE DIFFICULT LEGAL PROBLEM.

2. SECONDLY BURELLI REPORTED THAT THE PRESIDENT, SEVERAL MINISTERS AND MANY POLITICIANS COMMENTED ON HOW QUICKLY, CONFIDENTIAL

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INTELLIGENTLY AND SKILLFULLY YOU HAVE ASSUMED YOUR DIPLO-

MATIC RESPONSIBILITIES. THE PRESIDENT PARTICULARLY STRESSED HOW PLEASED HE IS TO HAVE YOU AS AMERICAN AMBASSADOR.

3. THE PRESIDENT ALSO TOLD BURELLI THAT HE WOULD NOT BE SWAYED FROM HIS PLANS TO NATIONALIZE THE PETROLEUM COMPANIES WHILE STICKING TO ARTICLE 5. HE HAS THE SUPPORT OF HIS PARTY AND THE MILITARY AND FEELS A CONTINUING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PETROLEUM COMPANIES IS ESSENTIAL TO THE OPERATION OF VENEZUELA'S PETROLEUM INDUSTRY.

4. BURELLI SAID THAT HE TOLD THE PRESIDENT THAT HE WANTED TO LEAVE HIS POST IN WASHINGTON THIS YEAR FOR PERSONAL REASONS -- HE SAID HE WOULD REMAIN UNTIL MARCH, 1976 AT THE LATEST BUT IMPLIED HE WOULD BE LEAVING EARLIER. BURELLI SAID THAT HE HAD HEARD THAT PEREZ WAS CONSIDERING SCHACHT OR MINES MINISTER VALENTINE HERNANDEZ AS HIS REPLACEMENT. BURELLI STRONGLY FAVORS HERNANDEZ. ALSO IN THE RUMOR CATEGORY BURELLI SAID THAT UN AMBASSADOR SIMON ALBERTO CONSALVI WOULD PROBABLY REPLACE SCHACHT AS SECRETARY GENERAL TO THE PRESIDENCY. INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NATIONALIZATION, PETROLEUM INDUSTRY, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, MILITARY CREDIT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE161300
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: WHLUERS:AN
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750237-0416
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750772/aaaaclzd.tel
Line Count: 81
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 SEP 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <29 OCT 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TALK WITH AMBASSADOR BURELLI FOR THE AMBASSADOR ONLY
TAGS: ENRG, PFOR, EINV, MASS, VE, US, (BURELLI), (LUERS)
To: CARACAS
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006